

REMARKS

Overview of the Office Action

Claims 1 and 5 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, because of various informalities.

Claims 1-4, 6, and 7 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,191,193 (“Le Roux”).

Claim 5 has been indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims, and amended to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph.

Status of the claims

Claims 1-4 and 6-7 have been amended.

Claims 4-5 have been canceled.

Claims 1-4 and 6-7 remain pending.

Rejection of claims 1 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph

With respect to claim 1, the Office Action states that the limitation “the identifiers stored in the storage means” lacks antecedent basis. Claim 1 has been amended to provide sufficient antecedent basis. Applicants submit that this rejection has now been overcome.

With respect to claim 5, the Office Action states that the limitation “the counter” lacks antecedent basis. Claim 5 has been canceled. Therefore, this rejection is now moot.

Rejection of claims 1-4, 6, and 7 over Le Roux under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

The Office Action states that Le Roux discloses all of Applicants' recited elements.

Independent claim 1 has been amended to include the allowable subject matter of original claim 5. Therefore, Applicants' amended independent claim 1 is now allowable over Le Roux.

Claims 6 and 7 have been amended to recite limitations similar to amended independent claim 1 and are, therefore, allowable over Le Roux for at least those reasons discussed above with respect to independent claim 1.

Dependent claims

Claim 4 has been canceled. Claims 2-3, which depend directly or indirectly from independent claim 1, incorporate all of the limitations of independent claim 1 and are, therefore, deemed to be patentably distinct over Le Roux for at least those reasons discussed above with respect to amended independent claim 1.

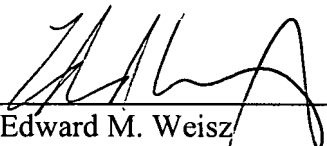
Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and withdrawal of all rejections, and allowance of all pending claims, are respectfully solicited.

Should the Examiner have any comments, questions, suggestions, or objections, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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